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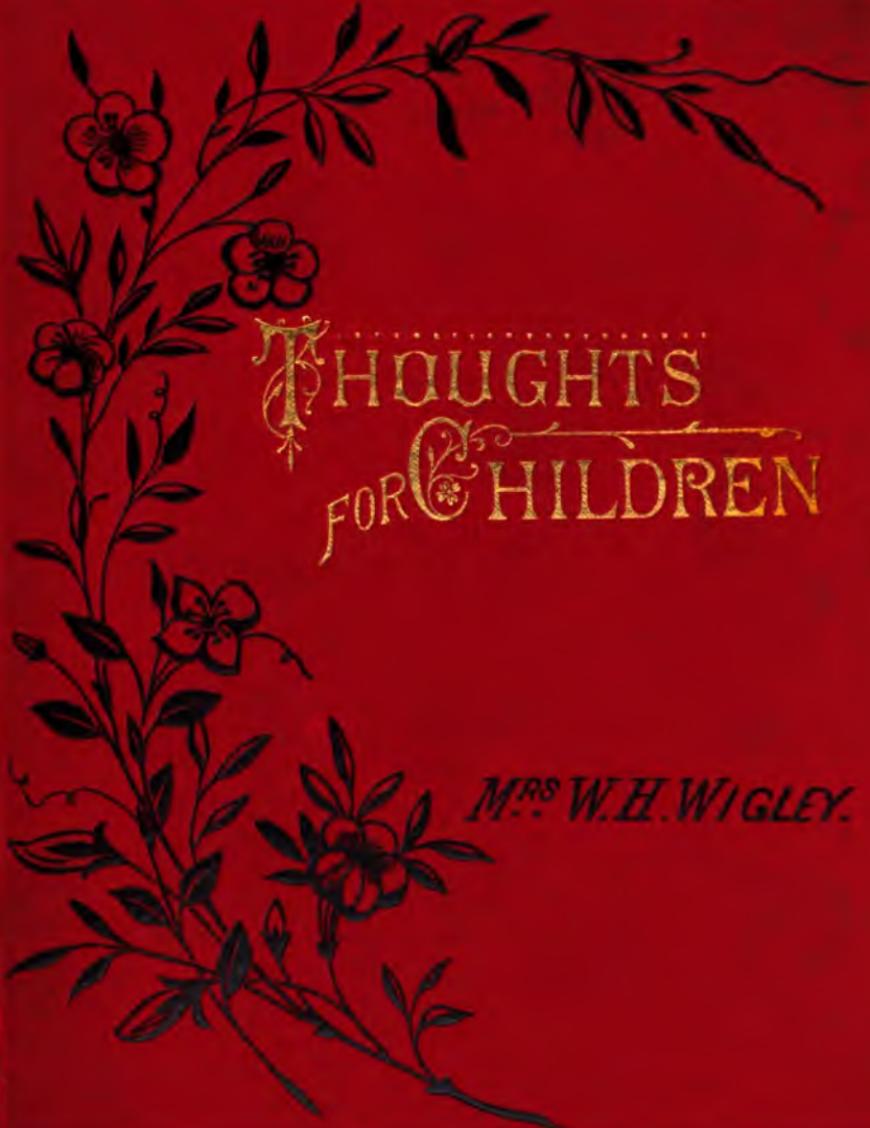
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THOUGHTS
FOR CHILDREN

MRS W. H. WIGLEY.



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THOUGHTS FOR CHILDREN.

BY

MRS. W. H. WIGLEY,

AUTHORESS OF

"WORKERS AT HOME," "OUR HOME WORK," "THE MARSHFIELD MAIDENS,"

"THE MERRYWEATHERS," "CLAIMS FOR KINDNESS,"

"THOUGHTS FOR MOTHERS," ETC. ETC.



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P R E F A C E.



HERE are times when the little ones gather about their mother tired of play—tired also of all active occupation. They lean their heads against her knee, or against each other, prepared only to think and listen. These are golden moments, too precious to lose. Then a few simple words spoken or read to them, about their little duties or higher aims and hopes, will do them more good than a dozen learned and logical lectures.

This little book, one of a contemplated series for such teaching at such times, is offered with much earnestness to mothers.

May the Angel of each little one watch over the seed, and may the dear Lord of the harvest grant an abundant increase.



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THOUGHTS FOR CHILDREN.

I.

About Thinking.



DARESAY when you see the title that is given to this little book you set it down as a very funny one. Perhaps you have heard a great many times in your life such sayings as these: "Of course children are the most thoughtless creatures anywhere;" or, "You cannot expect a child to think."

Now, children may be forgetful, but children do think a very great deal. Don't we know they do, now?

Have we not seen them times and times sitting before the fire in winter, or out on the green grass in summer, with their little round chubby faces very quiet and grave, and their eyes fixed in a dreamy kind of way on some object which they do not see at all? The flames they appear to be looking at may glow and flicker, or the trees wave, or the light clouds chase each other across the blue sky; they have no knowledge of what is going on because their thoughts are far away.

“Far away—where?” Oh, in all sorts of places. Out in the garden, perhaps, where their last game was played; or at school, where the last lesson was learned; or on the seashore, where the last holiday was spent; or perhaps—and this is the best place of all—up above the blue sky, where the angels dwell; or where, it may be, at that very time some dear little brother, or sister, or friend is singing the praises of the dear Lord who loves us so much—really looking into His dear face and listening to His voice.

Yes, children do think—and puzzling thoughts, too. What a number of things pass through their little minds day after day about which they say “Why?” and “I wonder!” And then they get thinking and thinking about it, until they have either settled the matter in some fashion, or have given up trying to settle it altogether.

Sometimes they carry these puzzles to those who are older and wiser; and when they are told they cannot understand such things now, they must wait until they are older, they don’t like the advice at all, and the thing which puzzles them is in their thoughts all the oftener because it *is* a puzzle.

Is it a good thing for children to think then? Surely it is. By thinking they find out a great number of things for themselves; and by thinking they fix in their minds what other people have found out for them.

“Then it is quite a good thing to think?” It is quite a good thing *to think well*, and to think

about good things; but we can waste time as well as save time by our thinking.

"How *can* we waste time by thinking?" you ask. Did you ever see children who were said to be *dreaming*? Those children were always thinking very deeply of nothing particular. If you spoke, they did not hear; when you spoke more loudly, they gave a great jump, as though they had been in a hole and had been obliged to leap out at the sound of your voice.

If you watch dreamy children at their lessons or work you could almost get impatient; their hands move as if they were windmill sails—they catch at all that comes in their way without knowing at all what they are going to do with it; and if you ask them why they do not get on with their business, they say, "Oh, I was thinking;" and they seem to believe *this thinking* is an excuse for forgetfulness of everything else.

Now, this is bad thinking. If such little people were made to tell their thoughts, how often

we should have to laugh at them ! The girls would have been among the fairies and the boys among the giants ; and both boys and girls would have to own that they had been fancying what they would do if some wonderful thing could happen to them—if they found an enormous treasure, or enchanted castle, or a “ goblin grim ” in a cave.

Little men and women, don't dream away the time. Life is very real and earnest, and all too short for all the true and hearty work you have to do in it. Try and think well, instead of lazily and foolishly.

But, besides thinking badly, you can think of bad, naughty things ; this is worse than the other. Why ?

Let me tell you the story of the two springs.

Once upon a time two little springs burst out of the opposite sides of a fair green hill. It was near the top of the hill, too, where there were little patches of pebbles and sand scattered about, where the grass and the flowers did not care to

grow. Far away in front you could see the valley spreading with the fields of green corn in spring-time and yellow corn in autumn time, and with orchards with white cherry blossom and white pear blossom and the lovely pink and red apple blossom, which, as the year went on, showed fruit, rich and ripe, instead of flowers.

But the little springs did not think much about blossoms or fruit, seed-time nor harvest. They gushed out of the hill through one of the pebbly patches, and scampered away through the green grass on its sides. They were going to find the big river, that was their near relation whose silver waters wound in and out in the valley below some few miles away. When they first started neither of them knew there was another little spring close by, but presently a slope brought them nearer together.

Spring No. 1 was the fullest and so it spoke first, "Where are you going, little spring?"

Then answered spring No. 2—

"Straight to the big river that is to bear me to the sea. And mother earth told me to do as much good as I could for her during the journey."

"I am sorry we cannot keep together," said the first little spring. "I like to have company to ripple with, and dance to; but I don't know much about doing good."

And just then the hillside rose again, and the two streams were separated, and went each their own way in opposite directions, getting wider and stronger every day.

But solitude did not make them sad—they went on merrily, leaping over the tiny stones, or winding in and out among the flowers and grass, lower and lower down the hillside.

Towards evening there came a tired little child carrying a dog that had lamed itself.

"See here, Fido," she said, as she came up to the first spring—"here is water to drink; this will refresh you."

But when she put the little dog to the water, the parched tongue refused to lap, for the spring had come from a salt and bitter source, and had a bad taste.

Then those who watched found out that these little springs were very different in themselves and in the work they did. For while No. 1 wandered down the hillside and through the valley, no one was glad to see it, or gave it a blessing; the green grass turned brown as the waters went over it, and the little flowers whose roots drank of it drooped their pretty blossoms and died. No little bird bathed in it, no weary traveller was refreshed by it. People said it was a poison-spring, and that it would destroy all that was beautiful wherever it went. But it was not so with the other little spring. That was sweet and good. It had gushed first of all from the cool rock under the hillside clear and sweet, and it had gathered no taint in its way. The lovely flowers drank of it and multiplied; the

grass grew thicker and greener along its edge; the little birds sipped of it and kissed it, and all were glad that the little brook had been sent to them.

And one day men came and determined to build a city in the valley at the foot of the hill. And then how much they thought of the water the little spring brought to them! They laid down pipes for it to run in, and built tanks for it to collect in. They protected it from dust and pollution, and charged even the children to do it no harm.

"For the spring is a blessing to us," they said; "without its waters we must leave our homes and wander away. Thank God for the pure little spring which supplies our need."

It made a great difference between these springs whether the source they came from was sweet or bitter, and it is just as important to us that all we say and do should have a good beginning.

From our thoughts our actions spring,
So, if thoughts are pure,
Words and deeds must blessings bring,
For God's word is sure.
If there's bitterness within,
Words and deeds will show
Some of that same bitterness,
And no blessing know.

So you see it does matter a great deal what a little child thinks about. Jesus said that the things which defile us, or soil our souls, are the things that come from within us. Our deeds and words are thoughts first, and good thoughts will spring into kind words and loving actions.

Suppose a little child should think thus—"I cannot bear to keep on doing so many things just because I am told. I wish I could do as I like. When I am at play, it is a shame I have to leave it and go to work. When I am reading a nice story, it is horrid to have to go to lessons, or to run and fetch things for some one."

Now those are bad, naughty, selfish thoughts. What sort of actions must come from such a

source? There will be ill-tempered, gloomy looks, instead of glad, bright ones. There will be slow steps and shuffling movements, instead of feet that seem to fly with a happy willingness to oblige and be a comfort and help to some one ; and perhaps a door will be banged, or a little brother or sister jerked or pushed, or a kind nurse, or, worse still, a dear mother, answered improperly.

Dear child, watch your thoughts for one day, and try and see what sort of springs flow from them ; and when you kneel down by your little bed to-night, say these few words—" Lord, make me pure in heart."

Dear Lord, be pleased to come
And dwell with me, Thy child,
And purify my thoughts
And keep them undefiled.
Then will the things I say and do
Be pure, and therefore blessed too.

It makes me sad to know
I am so very weak,
So slow to do aright,
To think aright, or speak.

ABOUT THINKING.

Just like a watch with broken spring,
I seem no good for anything.

Dear Lord, be pleased to come
And shape me by Thy grace,
No evil thing dare dwell
Near Thy pure, holy face.
Bless me, dear Jesus, even me,
And let me serve Thee perfectly.





II.

About Obedience.

ONCE I heard a little child talking to itself. This is what it said—

“Oh, how I wish I was a great large girl like Dora.”

“Why do you wish such a wish as that?” I said.

“Oh, because big large folks don’t have to mind *not any* other peoples.”

What a number of little children have thought just as this little child thought!

But they make a grand mistake though. No one in the whole wide world, not even kings and queens, can live without minding other people.

Ask the very oldest person you know—your grandmamma or grandpapa perhaps—and see what they will say. If they give you the names of all the different people they have to obey, even now they are getting quite old, you will have quite a long list.

It would be the very worst thing that could happen to us, dear child, if every one was allowed to begin to-day to do only just what they liked. Perhaps you don't think this *can* be true. Let us have a little talk about it.

Stand at the window and look out. You will not be long before you see a little child that looks poor. Supposing that child knew it could do just as it liked. Well, if it cast its eyes on you, in your nice comfortable clothes and home, with perhaps a great many treasures and pretty things all about, what do you think that child would like to do?

Most likely to come and have some of your good things—perhaps all of them. And if this

one left a little, some other child poorer still perhaps would *like* to have the rest. This is only one way in which everybody doing as they liked would be unpleasant. There are far more shocking ways than this.

Once a very great many people in the same country determined they would do as they liked. They said they would have no laws, no prisons, no policemen, and no punishments at all. So they rose up together, and killed the king and queen, and all the principal people in the kingdom ; they burst open the prisons and set the prisoners free ; they broke into the banks and took out all the money, and helped themselves to whatever they could find in house or shop. There was no *obedience* anywhere. "No people minded other people."

"Was this a good time to live in then?"
Dear children, it was a dreadful, dreadful time
The streets ran with blood. More than five thousand had their heads chopped off in one

city alone, and in some other places the peaceable, gentle, and good were shot or drowned in crowds.

Thieves stole, murderers murdered, oppressors oppressed, and riot and wickedness ruled everywhere.

Remember this, dear child. Wherever people are allowed to do as they please, the best, and the gentlest, and the weakest are always the worst off. Where people are taught *to obey*, then it is the naughty ones, who would lie and cheat, and thief and hurt, who are the worst off. It is a very sad time for the best and wisest of us when "the wicked bear rule."

There is no time in our lives when we have no need to obey laws. While we are children there are the laws of our parents at home or our teachers at school. When we grow older there are the laws of those for whom we may work, and always there are the laws of our country and of our God.

So you see every one has to learn obedience in their young days, and practise it all their lives through.

"*Learn obedience*," I said. Do you think it does not want any learning—that as soon as you are told to do a thing, you just have to do it, and that's all?

No, not always all. Little children—*very little* ones—obey like this; but as soon as ever you can remember what are the laws or wishes of your parents or teachers, it is your duty to obey whether they tell you or not. There would be a fine lot of work to do if everybody waited till some one kept telling them to do or not to do such and such things.

Suppose a man with some children should lie in bed or go idling about and taking his ease, instead of going to work—what would people think of him if, when the children were crying with hunger or cold, he should say, "No one told me to go and work for them 'to-day'?"

Suppose a dishonest man should be selling his goods, and he was to cheat badly—to sell some things that were not good for the same money as though they were good, or to give very bad weight or measure—what would you think of him if he should say, “No one told me not to cheat to-day”?

When a law is made, dear child—when those for whom it was made have once heard it—it is their duty to remember it and obey it *without any more telling*.

Perhaps you are working very hard at school just now, and you hear a good deal about “sciences.” You hope you shall get a science prize perhaps. Knowledge of all kinds is a good thing, and I hope, too, you will get a great many prizes for all you try to learn.

But do not forget that nothing you can learn will do you so much good as learning to obey well. *The science of obedience* is worth a good many of all the other sciences put together.

And it is a very hard thing to learn—you know it is. There is a little unruly will in each of your hearts, which very often wants to do most the very thing you ought not to want to do at all. Put this unruly will down. Say, “No; I must learn obedience. If I obey well now, I shall be a good son or a good daughter. This will lead me to obey well by-and-by, and then I shall be a good neighbour, a good friend, a good citizen, and a good subject.”

Obey well. We cannot do this without we *obey willingly*.

If a child should refuse to pick up a toy or take a book, and some one dragged them to it and opened their fingers, thrust the book in, and held it there, would *that* be obedience? Surely no. If we obey at all, we do it freely—without compulsion; or it is only compulsion and not obedience.

And we must obey *without hesitation—at once*.

Did you ever see a child moving along as

slowly as possible to do as it has been told, or putting off the obedience until after "I have finished this story" or "this game"? To obey every right command is our duty. Duty should always find us ready and waiting for it, anxious to do it, and do it as well as possible.

And we should obey *thoroughly, with all our might.*

Once I knew a little boy who had to go for a walk every day. Now, he liked reading much the best. His dear mother trusted him to go by himself, as she had a sick baby. Was he honourable and obedient? Ah, no! he just walked as far as the first seat, then he pulled out his book and read. He was never found out, but he did not obey. He cheated his good mother, who loved him so dearly and was so anxious for his good. There came a day when he held his own little son to that dear mother's grave, and told him about those walks. "Now I am a man," he said, "my heart is sad to think that for weeks

and weeks I deceived my dear, good mother. I went for a walk certainly, but not the distance she desired me to go. She deserved a whole obedience, she was so good, and I only gave her half obedience."

Dear children, ask the dear Lord to make you *obedient*.

When we ought to obey, then *at once* is the way,
No waiting for more pleasant season ;
And *willingly* too what we're bidden we'll do,
Without asking, "Why, what's the reason?"


And, with heartiness glad, let each lassie and lad
Strive hard to obey to perfection ;
No pretence and no sham, but as well as we can,
Then our work will stand any inspection.





III.

About Perseverance.

“ERSEVERANCE is the key which will unlock success.” This is what the copy-books say. What does it mean?

If you have any piece of work to do which you wish to bring to perfection, and you keep at it bravely until you have completed it, in spite of all kinds of hindrances and difficulties, then you have been persevering.

Without perseverance there would have been very little good done in the world. There never was a plan made for anything useful or beautiful where perseverance was not wanted to carry it out.

We very often forget, when we make use of

the many comforts and conveniences by which we are surrounded, that a very great deal of trouble had to be taken before they were produced first of all.

All round us are numbers of useful and ornamental things which have been made by man. Not one of these was brought to its present state of perfection without perseverance—industry continued in. The makers tried all sorts of plans before they found out *the best* plan; and they never thought of saying, "Oh, it must do," until they were quite satisfied with it. Every article of use, every piece of machinery, every handy tool, had to be thought about, measured and tried, and tried and measured, over and over numbers of times before the makers were satisfied with it, or any one else got the benefit of it.

Perhaps there is nothing we could think of more common now than our china drinking-cups. They are made of clay worked up into

a particular condition, moulded into a particular shape, baked in a particular heat, painted with a particular paint, and glazed over with a particular kind of cement or enamel.

Now, every one of these things cost somebody a very great deal of trouble. How to work the clay, and how to heat the ovens to the right heat, what paint would stand the fire without changing colour, and what enamel could be made that would not wash off—all this had to be found out. There were disappointments and failures more times than I can tell you. And one man who determined to discover the enamel spent years and years trying. It cost him all he had, it nearly lost him all his friends—even his wife thought him mad; and yet, in spite of everything, *he would not give up*. He persevered, and *would* succeed. And so he did; and every one of us ought to thank him for his perseverance.

Think about this. It is the same with everything we see in our homes. We owe all the

conveniences and comforts we have to the persevering industry of our fellow-creatures. We ought to be very much obliged to them, and to do all we can in our turn to benefit those who come after us.

Don't say, "I mean to by and by." If we intend to be persevering men and women, and do something to make other people all the better for our lives, then we must be persevering boys and girls. Perseverance is a habit into which we must grow day by day. We cannot leap into it all at once as you would leap into a boat. Some of us may be persevering naturally perhaps, and others may dislike to apply themselves closely to anything; but all of us need to practise this virtue day by day if we would attain to excellence.

And so it is a good thing that we can do so with every little duty that it falls to our lot to perform. All of you can remember something which you found rather hard even this very day. Well, that time was the time to persevere. You

are not required to undertake great things just yet, but even the very smallest difficulty that meets you will be all the better for a little perseverance. I have seen children give way before the buttoning of a shoe or a glove and call for help. I have seen others who scorned to ask any one to do for them that which they had power to do for themselves.

It is a grand thing to master a difficulty all by ourselves. Is it not a grand thing? Who has not felt a glow of honest pride at having learned a hard lesson, or worked out a difficult sum, or conquered a bad habit? And every effort we make in this way does us good. Did you ever hear that any part of us that is not used just wastes away. If you kept an arm or a leg quite inactive, in time it would wither up. If you could keep your eyes from seeing, or your ears from hearing, you would grow blind or deaf. If you did not use your brain in thinking, you would grow silly.

So just as a blacksmith's arm gets a little stronger with every good blow he strikes, so you will get a little stronger every time you fairly and honestly persevere in a good thing.

Make up your mind about this, then—whatever duty you have to perform, don't be disheartened because it is not easy to you. You ought rather to be glad about it. We do not want to be doing baby work all our lives. The wind that blows over the hill may be a little rough, or the water with which you sponge your bodies may be a little cold, but they brace you up—they make you brave and strong.

No; you must not shrink before difficulties. When one comes plant your feet firmer and set your little lips closer, but don't be daunted. Say, "Here is something I ought to do by myself—that I can do by myself if I keep on trying; so I mean to do it, and do it well." Then go to work. Whether learning a lesson, working a sum, sewing a seam, fighting a fault, or doing some duty, set

yourself to master it. Try again if you don't succeed at first. Ask advice if you fail; but do it yourself at last, and you will feel as though you were a little person going to be of some use in the world by and by.

Yes, it is a grand thing to persevere. "I'll try till I do" means success. "I know I can't" means defeat. One seems to make us think of a good stand-up backbone, and the other of a lump of jelly all tumbling about. Once I knew an old lady who often said one "can't" is equal to two "won'ts."

Mr. Smiles tells a story of Dr. Carey, the Indian missionary, which I will tell you.

When he was a boy he was most persevering. A difficulty seemed to call out all his courage. In play as well as in work he never allowed anything to beat him. Well, there was a tree near his home that no boy had ever been able to climb. "It shan't beat me," he said; "I mean to climb that tree somehow."

So he went to work, and very rough work he found it. He tore his clothes, he scratched his flesh and bruised his sinews; but he would not give in, he was determined to climb that tree. One day he succeeded so far as to get three parts of the way up, when down he came and broke his leg.

He was only a little lad, and of course the suffering was hard to bear. For six weeks he had to lie in bed, and it was a long time before he could walk again. At last he was allowed to go out. Where do you think he went first? Why, to climb that tree again, to be sure! Ay, and he did it too this time before he went home.

This boy was only a poor shoemaker, and yet he determined to become a scholar. He had to face difficulties worse than the high tree, and to suffer from worse things than a broken leg, but nothing daunted him. He became a learned man, and when at last he went out to India as a missionary he translated the Bible into sixteen

different languages, in order that the poor Hindoos might read the Word of God. By his steady perseverance he altered the hope and life of thousands, who might without him have always been in darkness.

"I can't" is a coward with very long face,
And with limbs that are shaky and weak ;
Whatever the time, or wherever the place,
You will know if you once hear him speak.
There's a drawl in his voice, and a whine in his tone,
That stamps him a coward abroad or at home.


"I'll try" is a brave one—so stalwart and strong,
With a bright cheery manner and word,
Who feels he must conquer before very long,
And who thinks giving up most absurd.
So when anything difficult causes a sigh,
Just take my advice and call in "I will try."





IV.

About Carefulness.

 HAVE among my little friends one or two that I cannot help thinking about as I write the word "careful." They are dear, lovable children, full of gladness and activity, who are missed and longed for when they are away, and yet who give a great deal of trouble.

Yes; they give a *great deal* of trouble, more than they ought to do. They do it in this way.

Mother or sisters may be busy, and they may have all sorts of things spread round them which they are using. All at once they hear a light footstep, and some bright-eyed, merry darling bounces in anxious to tell of something that has happened or is going to happen. At once things

have to be hastily gathered together into safe keeping, for all the workers know if this is not done there will be damage.

But why do they know this ?

Because the dear child they love is not careful. The feet are not careful in treading, nor the hands in handling. Every one else has to take more care because *they* are careless.

It is just these kind of children who leave open or who noisily bang the door; who bump against folks in passing them; who tilt the little ones over; who have all sorts of accidents with the china and the windows; who never know where to find anything they want; who lose their buttons, crush their hats, and make rips and tatters on their clothing. I heard a mother say once, "Freddy is a sad boy. I am obliged to have an extra nurse to keep him mended up."

Now, no one who loves children wants to see them sitting still or walking about stiffly and gravely. It is right that they should be glad and

joyous, full of fun and frolic ; but surely our happiness ought to make us more careful not to give trouble to others. Indeed, we know the very happiest person in the world must be the one who does the most to make others happy too.

Now, let us see who we ought to be careful for, and what we ought to be careful about.

I. Who we ought to be careful for ?

We should be careful for every one we have anything to do with. For the busy ones, lest we should make them more work ; for the sad ones, lest we should make them more sad ; for the tired ones, lest we should make them more weary ; and for the sick ones, lest we should give them more pain. Yes, we must be careful for the young and weak ones, the aged and worn ones ; careful for and about everybody. You cannot do very much, I know, but you can love them very dearly, and if you do this, all sorts of little loving deeds will come into your minds. Even closing a door quietly as to prevent a draught, or placing a foot-

stool, or running up or down stairs with your willing little feet to fetch and carry for them, are ways in which children may show their care for others.

2. What ought we to be careful about ?

First, we must be careful of the property of others. Remember, children's little hands do a great deal of mischief sometimes. They use books badly, turning down the leaves, or bending back the covers, or sitting too close to the fire with them, and warping them ; and they use a great many other things badly besides books.

I have seen children who have been sent to a nicely-arranged drawer to take out something, and by one or two twists and turns they have destroyed the neatness which some one else must restore again.

I have seen children sitting at table scattering crumbs of food all round them on the carpet, and trampling them in with their feet, leaving spots which some one else must get out.

I have seen children pass soiled or greased fingers over their dress, or books, or walls, or furniture, making stains which some one else must have trouble over.

I have seen children with pretty articles of china or glass in their hands, letting them slip through their fingers and be broken to pieces. No one can count up the beautiful and valuable things that have been destroyed in this way.

Blotted writing, stained clothes, soiled carpets, or disfigured walls, all show a want of carefulness on somebody's part about the things belonging to other people.

Perhaps you know some little friends whose house is always nice; everything appears in perfect order, everything is fresh and pretty. Furniture is not scratched and curtains not tumbled. Everybody knows that the children of the house must be careful.

And perhaps you know another home where everything seems out of its place. All is confu-

sion, muddle, and disorder. Nothing looks nice or comfortable, because the children there are careless.

Think about this, dear children. It is a very great thing to be careful of other people's property. Try and exercise such carefulness yourselves. If you borrow anything return it directly you have done with it, and be most particular that it shall take no harm while you have it. Every *thing* as well as every *body* should be better and not worse for being near us. It is in the power of almost all of us to improve and not spoil. Even a child can do this often,—and which is it best to do?

And besides being careful over property, we should be careful over *messages*.

Carrying a message is a piece of business that is very often entrusted to children, and they may do a good deal of mischief if they are careless about it.

Suppose they forget it altogether. Then people who are expected never come, and those come

who ought to stay away. All sorts of troubles and inconveniences arise, and sometimes even worse things than these.

I have heard of a child who was to order some medicine at once for a little sick babe. He forgot it. He went to school, stayed all day, and when he came home he found his little sister dangerously ill for the want of it. The poor darling had a bad throat, and nearly lost her life through her brother's carelessness.

I know another child whose little sister was going a long journey by coach. This child had to meet the coach, and to give a message to a person inside saying that on such a day the little one would be sent, and asking them to meet her. This child also forgot. No one met the little traveller. She remained in the coach, and was carried on twenty miles farther. As the coach did not run more than twice a week, it was some days before the parents found out anything about the lost little one. And though she had been well taken care of,

their anxiety had been very great, and think how much the little one must have suffered from fright and loneliness.

It is very sad to know that no one can tell all the mischief that has been done through forgotten messages. And it is sad that dear, loving, warm-hearted little *children* should be the cause of the mischief. "I forgot" is not an *excuse*. It is a very sad fault. It is selfishness if we can always remember the things that concern ourselves, and forget those which concern other people.

And let me give you another little hint about messages. We must not alter them at all. We must learn to carry them just as they are given to us. It is quite possible to make a kind message sound disagreeably, and a polite one to sound haughty and domineering only by altering *the tone* in which they are first spoken. Try and guard against this. A message which is trusted to you is really another person's property. You have no right to put anything to it, or to take anything

from it. You would scorn to serve anything else of theirs in this way. Think about this, dear children. Notice the exact words repeated to you; notice also the tone. It is best if you are in any doubt about it to repeat the words over to the message-sender, to make sure you have them right, and then go *at once* and deliver them.

And besides property and messages, we should be very careful of other people's *feelings*.

It is quite possible for a little child to give a great deal of pain, by not remembering this. I have known children who seemed to think that because they *were* children, they might cut and wound with *their tongues* as much as they pleased. If they attempted to do as much harm with *a stick*, or a *knife*, they would be punished and shut up—yet they make word wounds, and think nothing of it.

Many such a wound has been given to the afflicted—the lame, or the deformed, or the dull ones. It is quite shocking that bright and

merry darlings, who have no afflictions themselves, should add to the burden of those who are already heavily loaded with sorrow. You all know the sweet lines,

“Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child.”

What must that dear Lord think of those of His little ones whose tongues are like a sharp sword?

Watch your words, then, dear children—be very careful about them. Never speak ill *of* any one, or *to* any one. Never taunt, or jeer, or call names. Perhaps those you may meet with may not be quite pleasant to you. You may think them disagreeable, or haughty, or proud. Well, if you wish to help them to something better, you must not practise the same bad ways. This will be doing yourself harm. Calling a person by the name of some fault is not the way to make them feel anxious to get over it. Be a little peace-maker—not one to stir up strife.

If you are careful, and trustworthy, and gentle,

how much you will be able to help those you love best in the world. It is rare praise when a mother calls her child her best help, or her best messenger, or her best comfort, or her best nurse. You can never deserve such praise if you are careless.

It will be hard work sometimes to make yourself take care about things, but remember the Master will know you are striving to be a faithful little servant, or a brave little soldier. And if you love Him, you *must* have a glad heart through it all, because He will smile upon you.

There came a roaring wind one day
All round about my home,
And men could trace the course it took
By the mischief it had done.
There's many a child,
So bright and gay,
Who does much harm
By a thoughtless way.
Let no one track *you* here and there
By mischief done through want of care.



V.

About Truthfulness.



BOY was once ordered by his master to take a box to a place a good way off.

"You will have to take the omnibus; here is the money. The driver will charge more as you have heavy.luggage."

The boy shouldered the box to carry it to the corner from which the omnibus started. On his way he thought, "If I could go a cheaper way I could save some of the money for myself." Then he placed the box in a doorway and looked about him. A man was driving a cart slowly in the direction he wished to go.

"Give me a lift into the city for sixpence," said the boy.

"All right," the man answered; "tumble in."

But when the boy began tumbling the large box in before him the man did not like it.

"Hold hard there," he said; "you said nothing at all about a box—that takes a sight more room than you do, and I'm loaded already. It's worth a shilling to take that thing a mile."

"Ah, well, we won't quarrel about that," the boy answered. But when they came to the city the man expected more than the sixpence. "I never promised you any more," said the boy; "and I never said I had no luggage. People who have nothing to carry don't ride in such a shaky concern as yours for pleasure."

But the man was angry, and tumbled the box over the side of the cart into the muddy road, and drove away, lashing the poor horse in his anger.

The boy got his box on to the pavement and stood looking at its condition very ruefully. A poor man out of work came up—

"What's the matter, matey? Found a good strong box?"

"No; that man put it down in the dirt pretty roughly, and as I have my best coat on I don't know how I am to manage it. Will you carry it for me for fourpence?"

"Where are you going?"

"Only to Brook Street."

"I don't know where that is. It's pretty heavy, I see."

"Oh, Brook Street is not quite into Russia! I'll show you the way."

But it was *a long* way, though not so far as Russia, and the man felt that the boy had cheated him. "You said it was not far," he said as he took the fourpence.

"No, I didn't," said the boy. And they parted with angry feelings.

The boy took the box into the house. A gentleman came to him, "What have you done to the box?" he asked; "one of the corners is split, and

it is covered with mud. Your master ought to have known you were not strong enough to carry it. Did you drop it?"

"No, sir," the boy answered promptly. "I am quite sure I have done no mischief at all to it."

"Tell your master I shall expect him to pay damages. Some one is very much to blame for its condition."

The boy went home. "You have been a long time," his master said.

"The man did not take me all the way. He grumbled at the money—said it was too little."

"These omnibus men are unbearable; they are never satisfied. I'll write to the company about it. But I am glad you got it safe there at last; here is sixpence for your trouble."

And the boy thought he had managed very cleverly; but he was an untruthful, scheming lad. He took a great deal of pains to do a wrong thing and forgot the trouble that must come of it. The gentleman had his property injured, and blamed

the master, who lost the gentleman's custom, and dismissed the boy, the men were made angry, and the poor horse was whipped. And yet what did the boy do?

He would say he told no untruth. He said certain things that were true, and let people believe what they liked from the way in which he said them. If they made a mistake, was he to blame?

But he meant to deceive them by what he said, and it is this which makes the untruth. Whatever we say *meaning to deceive* IS A LIE.

He meant the carter to believe he had no luggage when he made the bargain.

He meant him to believe he would pay him extra when he said, "We won't quarrel about it."

He meant the porter to think that the distance was short.

He meant the gentleman to think the box was damaged before he had charge of it.

He meant his master to think that an omnibus

conductor had been impertinent, and asked for too much money. But he did not positively say these things.

Dear children, I want you to think over this story, and to learn from it that it is quite possible not to speak the truth without actually telling a lie.

It is a hard thing to be perfectly and altogether true; but there is nothing makes any character more lovely than this. What a happy people we should be if we dared to speak the truth at all times!

Children sometimes like to display their courage by showing what they dare do. Oh that we were all brave enough to be altogether true, to be upright and straightforward—ready with the answer or the deed at once without hesitation—the true answer and the upright deed.

Then we should have nothing to hide, and nothing to fear. Those are beautiful words of David's, "God shall make thy just dealing clear as the

noonday." Everything open and bright and easily understood.

Here is another thought for you, dear children, "They that deal truly are God's delight." For if we have this excellence, there is so much other excellence included in it.

Where there is truth there is sincerity—no deception in word or manner ; and there is uprightness—no cheating and scheming to get the better of another.

Where there is truth there is perfect justice—no bribe would make us favour any side or opinion ; neither would there be any shams or make-believes, nor any dishonesty. In dealing with others nothing would be false—not weights, nor measures, nor tickets, nor descriptions. The best would not be put at the top and the worse below. A tradesman would deal fairly. "This is good," he would say, "but this is not so good. Of course, the best will cost most money." Then little children, or persons of inexperience, would never be

imposed upon, and no one would try to get the better of them for gain.

Would not this be a good time, dear children? Remember we can all help to bring about such a time by being true ourselves. Let each of us try every day to be more careful over our words and deeds.

Don't be untrue even in play. Never say, "He is not here," when he is here. Nor, "I wonder where they are gone," when you yourself have just stowed them away in some sly hiding-place. If we learn to speak falsely in play, it is only too easy to do so in earnest. And if you see that anything you have said is leading other people to form a wrong opinion, set them right at once. Be very particular about this. Perhaps the whisper comes to you that they will think better *of you* if you do not set them right, though they may not think so well of some one else. Never mind this; put the thought away at once. Nothing in the world is worth a lie. Be

noble enough to be true, and "God will delight in you." Dear children, if He, your Heavenly Father, smiles upon you, it will not matter much if you meet frowns elsewhere.

But even in the world a true and upright man is honoured. Men trust him—his word is taken at once—anything he recommends is sure of success. They call him an honourable man.

And remember, dear child, that there is no victory obtained even over an evil thought without a battle. Are we ready to strive earnestly after all these things which can make us more like the Master? He is looking on, and lovingly watching—He is waiting to help—go to Him, dear child, and tell Him of every difficulty and every failure. Go to Him daily for fresh supplies of grace.

Words I say and things I do
May be either false or true ;
Christians old and children young
Find it hard to keep the tongue.

But if we will watch and pray
God will help us day by day ;
When we feel temptation near
Tiny words can reach His ear.

If we had no Father nigh,
No dear Lord to hear our cry,
We might say, " We are too young ;"
We can't conquer foes so strong ;"
But with Jesus at our side,
His dear love to help and guide,
We can fight and victory win
Over words and deeds of sin.





VI.

About Cheerfulness.



THAT is a beautiful story told of a little girl, who went singing through the wood. If you have forgotten it, or if you never met with it, let me tell it you now.

A little girl had some business to do for her mother, which took her through a wood. And the child had a heart so glad, and a spirit so bright, that as she went she sung cheerily and sweetly the songs she had learned at her mother's knee. And as the words moved her, her little voice rose or fell loudly or softly.

Now it chanced that in the wood, stooping under the trees, picking up wood to make a

fire, was a poor old widow. There was very little oil in her cruse, and very little meal in her barrel, and she had almost begun to think that God had forgotten her, she was so old and lonely and poor. Suddenly she heard in glad hearty tones, as though in answer to her thoughts, the words of her favourite hymn—

“The birds without barn
Or storehouse are fed,
From them let us learn
To trust for our bread.
His saints, what is fitting
Shall ne’er be denied,
So long as ’tis written,
‘The Lord will provide.’”

The tears rose in the old woman’s eyes. She could not see the singer, but as she tottered homewards, her heart blessed her for her song.

The little one continued her journey, still singing; the thorns and stouls made the way difficult, and now and then a briar scratched her face, but her song ceased not.

And it chanced that in another part of the wood sat two friends. And the one was pouring into the other's ear a tale of her trouble. She was tired of home life, she said. She had heard that there were grand sights and doings in the large towns far away, and she had determined to go there and see for herself. Her mother was very much against her going, but of course mothers get old-fashioned notions, sometimes, about their children. She meant to go anyhow.

And just as her friend was about to answer there came the sounds of the child's voice, plaintive and sweet—

“Be kind to thy mother, for lo ! on her brow
The traces of sorrow are seen !
Oh well may'st thou cherish and comfort her now,
For loving and kind hath she been.

“Remember thy mother—for thee she will pray
As long as God giveth her breath ;
With accents of kindness then cheer her lone way,
E'en to the dark valley of death.”

And the young girl who had been speaking bowed her head before the child's song, and went to her home thinking of her mother's love and kindness as she had not thought of it before, and shaken in her resolution to follow her own will.

And so the child went through the wood singing—singing one song after another; each song doing some good work. There lay a man hidden in the thicket, waiting for the darkness to carry out some deed of violence and plunder.

“Why should I deprive my neighbour
Of his goods against his will?
Hands were made for honest labour,
Not to plunder nor to steal,”

reached his ears and entered his heart. There came to him the memory of days when he, a simple-hearted little boy, learned those very words at school. He thought of the dead mother then so proud of him, and the little sister who shared his joys and sorrows, and the feeling

stirred within him bore good fruit, for he went home determined to forsake his evil courses and lead an honest life.

Now it was not much this little child did, was it? Just her duty, gladly and happily, and the gladness and the happiness found a voice in her song.

She was all the better *herself* for this bright spirit—the doing of her work did her good. Every step she took became pleasanter through it, and the burden she carried was scarcely felt. The trees, the birds, the flowers, the peeps she got of the blue sky overhead, and the leaves dancing in the sunshine, all seemed touched with a beauty which really sprung first in her own heart. There may have been thorns and roots to hinder her progress, or difficulties of various kinds to master, but her gladness was not interrupted by these slight inconveniences, and so she blessed the hearts of all who heard her.

And *her work* was all the better. Hers were

no dragging, unwilling steps. That which is cheerfully done is always best done.

“A merry heart goes all the day,
A sad one tires a mile away.”

And *other people* were better too. Supposing she had carried a sullen face and a heavy heart with her; we can understand she might have preferred very much to stay at home, and read a nice story, or to go to play with her friends, to that long lonely walk. But if she had given way to those feelings, could she have sung the songs of gladness which did so much good? Then the old woman might have gone sorrowfully to her lonely hut, the daughter might have wilfully left her mother, and the thief might have carried out his plan.

There are very few of us who recollect what a grand thing it is to carry a glad brave spirit in our bosoms. In this world we are constantly meeting with little crosses and vexations which are hard to bear, and which will do us harm if

we let them, but which fall off from us without causing us even a slight inconvenience if we meet them with cheerfulness. There are two ways of looking at everything that happens to us. The same thing may be "horrid" or "nice" according to our own frame of mind. And if there is a state of feeling which renders us happy whatever comes, is it not worth striving after? We shall be the better for it ourselves, our work will be the better for it, and other people will be the better for it too.

What do friends mean when they call a child "Little Sunshine"? Why, that it has a cheerful spirit which scatters brightness on every one and chases away the shadows. If every one had such a spirit, if every one bore the evils bravely and made the best of everything, "singing as they went," would it not be a good time? Let each of us help to bring about such a good time. Don't let us be grumblers, or discontented, or peevish, but brave and hearty and cheerful. Let

us get the habit of always hunting out a bright side in everything that happens to us, and the good qualities of all the people we meet; let us sing on our journey all the day long.

And remember, dear children, cheerfulness does good *always*, and grumbling *never*.





VII.

About Unselfishness.

“**I** SHOULD like to be a hero.”

Who can count up the number of times these words have been said by just such little people as those who will read these pages? And if the question had been asked of them “What sort of a hero?” the answer would probably have been, “One of those who do the very grandest and noblest things that ever are done—things that make every one speak of them and honour their names—things that all the world is the better for.”

I have seen boys who, when hearing of such deeds, would erect their whole figure and clench their hands, while their eyes would light up

with eagerness and excitement, and their hearts burn with the desire to be just as brave, or enduring, or noble as those of whom the story spoke.

I have seen girls shed soft warm tears over like stories, and they have longed to comfort and encourage and help all who so endure.

I remember once watching some children at play, and wondered why they so often stood in groups talking. I asked one bright little man of six to tell me what weighty matters were important enough to tempt them to leave their more merry games. I will tell you our conversation.

"Oh, we don't talk much, we see who is the bravest."

"But how can you tell that, standing as you do?"

"Well, the one that can bear it longest is the brave one."

"Bear what longest, Franky?"

"Oh, what we do. Sometimes we pinch, sometimes we bend back the fingers, sometimes we

prick with a pin. The one who won't holloa whatever we do is the pluckiest one."

Of course I tried to make the little man see that this sort of thing showed anything but courage on one side—for those who inflict unnecessary pain are cowards, no matter how that pain may be borne—but I am not at all sure he was convinced. He thought only of the endurance of what was so hard to bear, and he so much admired the *endurance* that he lost sight of the *righteousness*.

It is just this—the bearing or the doing of *hard* things because they are *right*—which make heroes.

What makes anything hard to us?

Just our own characters. We are all different. Some of us are tender and gentle—some are bold and daring—some are quiet and some are noisy. Now there can be nothing grand in doing the things *we like* to do. It is when we put aside our own likes and dislikes, and do right because it is right, not considering ourselves at all, *forgetting ourselves altogether, that we are heroes.*

You have most of you heard the story of the little cabin boy at sea, whose mother had taught him that it was right to pray. Day after day he knelt among the men and reverently asked God's help and blessing. The crew of that ship were bold, bad men, and they led the child a sad life. They teased and annoyed him on every occasion, besides hindering and interrupting him. When they found words of no use, they tried kicks and blows and loss of food.

At last it seemed as if all the men in the ship had joined to subdue that one poor little boy and make him do wrong.

One day the officers were annoyed at the disturbance, and also perhaps at the sight of the child's poor white face. They called him and spoke to him.

"Will, why don't you do as the men tell you?"

"I cannot, sir."

"Well, you must. If you annoy them any

more I shall have you punished. Remember these are my orders."

"I cannot obey you, sir. I am very sorry, but I promised my mother I would pray."

Then the officer got angry. You know they are very severe with any one who is rebellious at sea. But he thought if he gave the boy a good fright it would settle the question at once. So he called the men on deck, and told some of them to bring their guns with them.

There were the officers, and the strong rough sailors, and in the midst the poor little trembling boy.

"Now," the officer said, "you are to promise at once never to annoy the men in this way any more. If you won't, then say your prayers for the last time, for you shall be shot."

What did the boy do? He looked at the angry officer and the hard, unkind men, and at the terrible guns ready pointed at him. And he remembered that far away was the dear mother

and little brothers and sisters who loved him so much. Could he give up all thought of ever seeing them again?

His face grew even paler, but he did not hesitate. He just said gently, "I'll pray, if you please, sir," and then he kneeled down on the deck, and, clasping his hands, said what he believed was his last prayer. He asked that God would bless and keep his dear mother and let Sandy and Tom grow up to take care of her, and not to let her feel sorry about her Willy; and then that God would bless all who were in the ship, and bring them safe home again after he was dead.

And did they shoot him when he had done? Surely not. More than one hard heart was softened, and more than one eye wet. And the child was dismissed with the words—"Well, now we come to think about it, we mean to let you live a little longer to look after Sandy and Tom."

But the boy was no more molested after that.

Don't you think he was a hero. He did not like ill-usage, or starvation, or angry words. He would have chosen anything sooner than strife and anger; and yet he must do right even in the face of death. He put away his own feelings, *his own self* altogether, and only thought of his duty.

A great many years ago, before the Lord Jesus Christ came, there was in ancient Greece a town called Sparta. The men of this town, though they knew nothing of the true God, knew very well that if they were to be brave and successful they must learn to do their duty without thinking of themselves. They had a wise ruler, who felt that the more we forget ourselves, the more likely we are to remember others. So he formed a very wonderful code of laws, which he made them swear they would keep. All these laws were hard and stern. They were to have no grand houses and no comforts; they were to dress plainly, and eat only coarse food. They

were to train themselves to endure hardness, and constantly to deny themselves what they most wanted to have. The great rule of their lives was to keep the body and its desires and wishes in the background.

And these people grew very brave and hardy, and were held up as patterns of endurance and self-denial. They seemed to watch for opportunities of doing what was not pleasant to them. Once I read a story of an aged man who came late to some sight-seeing in a large building, perhaps it was the Colosseum in Rome, of which we hear such wonderful accounts. At any rate, the old man was soiled with travel and very weary, and as he passed slowly round the building, looking vainly for an empty seat, the young nobles jeered and mocked him, and made fun. Presently he came near where some Spartan youths were seated, and immediately they rose and stood until the aged stranger had taken a place.

Now this was a little thing to do, you may say.

Other people have done the same hundreds of times, but it shows you just what I want you to think about, that it is a brave thing to forget ourselves in thinking of what is right, or in other words, *that it is unselfishness which makes the hero.*

A standard-bearer is on the field of battle—the enemy is pressing down thick upon him, and he knows he will receive small mercy at their hands. Shall he turn and flee, there is just a chance he may escape? What is his duty, putting all thought of himself away? His duty is to stand by his flag; that is the rallying-point for his comrades. He must “endure hardness, as a good soldier,” without a thought of himself.

A good man goes out to teach the heathen—long and wearily he labours. There seems to be no answer to his many prayers, no result for all his patience and teaching. His friends say to him, “We will leave this post and seek another where our work will be more valued.” It may be that a less trying climate, a people more

anxious to learn, may seem to him most desirable and comfortable things—a something that will cheer him and give him fresh strength. Shall he go? Putting all thought of himself aside, what will become of his poor ignorant people if he does? It may be that presently some of them will awaken, and leave their evil ways. No, he will not go; he will stay on at his post, determined never to leave it for any selfish cause whatever. That man is a hero.

We have such heroes in all lands and in all positions—among sailors, soldiers, people in private life and people in public places—and we call them heroes because they do their duty in times of difficulty and danger without thinking of themselves.

Those who want to be heroes must learn to forget themselves for the sake of others; to be ready to lose their own lives so that some one else may be saved; to give up their own happiness so that some one else's may be secured.

Dear child, would you still like to be a hero? Are you striving to be one in a small way now?

How about your own will? It is very pleasant to have it; it is a thing we strive very hard for sometimes—our own way. Watch yourself now. The next time you feel inclined to rebel at any command or arrangement which is against your wishes, stop; say, "Keep down, you unruly self! I want to be a hero some day."

How about your temper? Is it patient and gentle and winning? or is it domineering or aggravating? Remember no one who gives way to fits of passion or of sullenness or of impatience is on the road to heroism. Keep *your self* down; don't listen to its wants or its fancies or its wishes; *some day you mean to be a hero.*

How about your appetite? Are you very fond of good things? Do you like to have a large share of niceties whether other people get a small share or not? Take care; heroes are quite above

such a thing. Rule over your self; study other people's good before your own.

I spoke just now about the Spartans. They did a great many things I should be sorry indeed to see you doing. But there was one thing, at least, in which we should try to follow their example. They fought a continual battle against *self*, and in this they became fine characters. Unselfishness! a child who thinks of others first, who is ready to give up and to endure anything, *everything*, in order to do good to some one else.

I have sat and listened to and watched some children who seemed to have no other pleasure but giving to and doing for those they dwelled amongst—"What would *you* like best?" "I should like *you* to go, because I am sure *you* would enjoy it;" and so on. Those children put self out of sight.

And I have seen and heard other children who scarcely ever used any pronoun but *I* and *my*

and *mine*; it was *I, I, I*, all day long. Depend upon it, such children will never, never be heroes.

You cannot tell anything about the work God may have for you in the future. Perhaps you will be in some place of power and influence to which thousands will look with confidence and trust, and your name will be famous. Perhaps you will be busy in some little out-of-the-way nook, and you will scarcely be heard of beyond your own home. God knows all this without any doubt. He appoints your lot and settles the bounds of your habitation, and if we are His dear children that is quite enough for us. But wherever we are we can be one of God's heroes; we can live holy, pure, and unselfish lives, fighting a battle that never ends, with our own hearts, keeping the body down, *under*, and "in all these things being more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Self is with me all the day,
When I work and when I play ;
When I eat, or speak, or learn,
Self pops up at every turn.

'Tis so very hard, I find,
This unruly self to bind ;
Hard to think of "thou" and "thee"
Sooner than of "mine" and "me."

When my Lord was here below,
He forgot Himself, I know ;
Never sought His own, but tried
To bring good to all beside.

Paul, when striving for *a crown*,
Tried to *keep his body down* ;
Timothy loved God, yet he
Must bear hardness soldierly.

Souls get strength and bodies health,
When we keep in check this self ;
May I yet unselfish prove,
Rooted, grounded, built in love.





VIII.

About Kindness.

IF those of you who live in large towns were to go much into the far away country places, you would find that the commonest words are very often used in quite a different way to what you use them. Here in Gloucestershire they use many words so. *Kind* is one of these words.

Once I heard a farmer talking about his little pigs. "There is something wrong with them," he said, "they are a long way from *kind*." He meant that they did not grow and flourish—that they were not vigorous or healthy.

I have heard in the same place such remarks as these—

"The barley looks bad, but the wheat is kind enough."

"My plants look kind and healthy."

"Those cows take kindly to their crushed beans."

This is not quite the way in which you have used the word, is it? and yet it is not so very different. "To be kind" to these country folks means little more than to be in a right and proper condition of growth and vigour—to flourish—to do well and to look well.

There is this difference, however—*their* "kind" has more to do with the thing itself. *Our* "kind" certainly has more to do with other people.

But a *kind* feeling is still a beautiful feeling. It beautifies the face—the eyes—the lips—the temper. A *kind* heart gives out sunshine, and all who come near it flourish, and must be the better for it. A kind heart means active, vigorous, loving deeds, you know; for what the heart

prompts the hands and feet and lips are only too willing to do.

In the English Prayer-book there is a very good meaning given to the word kindness. It is this—
“to hurt nobody by word or deed.”

Let us think about these words a little.

To hurt *no body*. Not *no person*, or *no friend*, or *no creature*, but *no body*. It does not say, “Don’t hurt those who have two legs, or six legs, or no legs at all,” but just *nothing that has a body*—nothing that is alive then—nothing at all that is able to feel must be hurt.

And neither by word or deed. We are not to speak unkindly nor act unkindly. We may “hurt” in what we say, and in what we leave unsaid, as well as in what we do or leave undone.

Shall I tell you what I mean more plainly?

A little girl was angry with her sister. She spoke loudly and sharply. She told her she was ugly and disagreeable—that she did not love

her—that she never would love her—and that she wished she would never come near her.

All this was very sad and very unkind. Long after the naughty girl had forgotten the words she had said, the little sister thought over them very sorrowfully, and grieved about it very much. Her sister had hurt her by the words she said.

A little boy was standing among some of his schoolmates. They were all speaking of one who was absent, and who lived so near to him that he knew him well. Some one had said the absent one was a coward and a thief, and they added one thing after another to what they had fancied or heard some one say, until he had a very bad character indeed.

Well the little boy who listened did not believe all they were saying, he knew it could not be true. Indeed there were some things which he could show were quite wrong. But he let the boys say just what they liked. “It is no business

of mine," he said to himself; "*I don't think it, and that's enough.*"

But it was not enough. If we can do another any good by speaking, it is wrong to be silent. That boy hurt his schoolfellow by what he left unsaid.

A baby may fall out of a window that some one has not closed, or down some stairs because some one "just left the door a minute," and it would suffer because something was left undone, just as much as if it had been actually pushed, or slapped, or bruised, or cut *for the purpose*, by something really done.

Now you understand what I meant by saying words or deeds, *done* or *left undone*, may be either kind or unkind.

Did you ever think this thought—that it is often the people we love the best who most suffer from our unkindness. I am afraid it is quite true.

Very often it is the chance visitor—almost the

stranger—that we are most anxious to be agreeable and kind to, and not the dear, loving, patient mother who has care for us always.

Or it is the little new playfellow at school that we give up our will to, and to whom we are most affectionate and amiable, and not to the dear companions of our whole life—the brothers, and sisters, and cousins with whom we have been brought up.

“Mother,” a bright little boy said one day, “I should like to punish Willy for losing my ball, so I shall go and give him my new knife.”

Was not this a kind little boy?

“Mother,” a little girl said, “I shall hide my new doll, or else sissy will be sure to want to nurse it.”

Was not she unkind?

Kindness has a warm, loving heart, which is always looking out for some one to be good to. Its words are as precious and as beautiful as diamonds, and it delights in making and spread-

ing gladness; *tears* and sad looks are a great trouble to it, and it would like to make every one quite happy if it could; and so it speaks gentle, loving words, and does gentle, loving deeds.

"No body," by word or deed.

Not friends at home, nor strangers abroad; neither at work nor in play. We must never *hurt them*, or never be unkind to them.

But other things have a body besides these.

What about your pets?

These have bodies; these can feel and can suffer, and these must not be hurt.

You would not wish to hurt them, I am sure. You love your pets very, very much—your dog or cat, your birds or rabbits. How sorry you would be to make them suffer, and yet a great many children *do* make them suffer.

How? I will try to tell you some of the ways. First, they may make them suffer through ignorance. I saw a little child to-day with a pretty little tabby kitten. The child's mother

said, "She loves her kitty better than any other plaything." Now kitty was not a play-*thing*, it might be a play-*fellow* perhaps. But this little child thought it *was* a thing. She lugged it by one leg, by its tail, by its ear, she poked her fingers into its eyes, and she pushed a stick up its nose. Now you may easily guess that the little one had no thought of the pain she was inflicting. She did these things through ignorance. Very soon the little one would learn from her own experience the effect of pulled hair or wrenched limbs, but until then her teaching of such a point ought not to be overlooked. If you have such little ones in your home, try and lead them very early to deal tenderly with all the animals they handle.

"Stroke poor kitty gently, darling;" "Lift poor kitty so, dear, poor kitty must not be hurt," and such like sayings, will do much to remove the ignorance from a child's mind.

You have a bird perhaps—a pretty little yellow

canary. These birds, you know, are foreigners, they come to us from a brighter, clearer air than our own, and no doubt they feel the change. Try and remember this. Don't expose them to cold, and don't shut them up in a close room. It hurts them too if you hang their cages too high in the room you use. You know, perhaps, that bad air always rises to the top. The poor little birdie cannot speak to tell you that the air is bad. It cannot say, "Dear little master, or mistress, the air is too close here." So you must remember that your canary's cage should not be higher than your mother's head at the very highest, and that it should not be hung in a draught.

And secondly, I am sure children make their pets suffer through carelessness. How often I have heard a poor dog whining and fretting. When I have gone to look at him, I have found him in a nice house with a comfortable bed, and a pretty bright collar and chain, and a sleek, well-

fed body, and yet he whined and fretted. Why ? The poor fellow had no water ! For hours perhaps his dish had stood dry, and he was parched with thirst. Only think how bad it is to be thirsty, and how very unkind it is to allow a poor dog, tied up, to have to bear such a suffering.

Dogs should have fresh water at least twice a day ; and, if they must be tied, give them a run as often as possible.

No one who does not like the trouble of cleaning out pets, or of attending to them regularly, ought to be allowed to keep them. How should we like to be fed and cleaned now and then, just when some one happened to remember us, and at no other time ? If you have any pet, try and fix some time when attending to them will be the only thing to be done. Just after or just before your own breakfast is a very good time, because your own wants would perhaps remind you of theirs. Many pretty pets have been starved to death, many more have died of disease caused by

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being fed plentifully one day and starved the next. Try and be thoughtful about your pets.

And I think animals suffer a good deal by being made to do things that it is not natural to them to do. I do not care to see performing animals. It is very wonderful that they can be taught to be so clever, but I am sure the knowledge comes to them through very much suffering only too often. I know some dear boys who would not cause a single little pain, who have taught dogs to do wonderful things by praising and rewarding them; this was very nice, but I am afraid some dogs and other animals have been taught to do many things from fear of the whip. Teach your pets to work for love and they will not suffer, but never punish them till they learn what you wish.

And, dear children, lift up your voice against all kinds of unkindness or cruelty everywhere. Don't make a friend of a boy who would torture a fly, or rob a bird's nest, or throw stones at a

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frog ; he is a cruel boy. Be tender, and gentle, and merciful to every living thing. If it is necessary to put anything to death, do it quickly and with as little pain to the animal as is possible. If a cat is to have a mouse that has been caught, kill the mouse first, don't let her torture it. And with every living thing, dear child, get into a habit of asking yourself what it feels under such and such treatment. Try and put yourself in its place. How would you like these things to be done to you ?

Remember the very highest motive is given to us to make us think aright about such things. "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful."

And, remember, also, that the woman who was most praised all through the Bible had these words said of her—

"In her tongue is the law of kindness."

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